THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • JULY 04, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianxpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

POLL FINDS HARRIS, NOT BIDEN, HAS BETTER CHANCE OF BEATING TRUMP

Indian-origin US Vice President Kamala Harris is better placed to beat Donald Trump than President Joe Biden, according to a CNN poll

TRUMP HAS 6-POINT LEAD OVER PRESIDENT

About 47% of registered voters support Trump, while 45% back Harris in a hypothetical matchup, the poll found. In the Biden vs Trump matchup, 49% of registered voters said they would vote for Trump as against 43% for Biden. His poor performance in last week's debate with Trump has put the spotlight back on Biden's advanced age and ability to lead the US | P12

MORE PRESSURE ON BIDEN TO STEP DOWN

- Pressure is mounting on Biden to step down as Democratic party's presidential nominee. "There's a large and increasing group of House Democrats concerned about (his) candidacy," a Democratic lawmaker said
- According to one Democratic aide, at least 25 party lawmakers in the House of Representatives are preparing to demand that Biden step aside

Sept 10

IS WHEN BIDEN AND TRUMP WILL FACE OFF IN THE NEXT DEBATE

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Judicial probe into Hathras stampede

Ex-Allahabad HC judge Brijesh Srivastava to head 3-member panel, submit report in 2 months; Yogi flags conspiracy angle

Bags and other belongings lying at the scene a day after a massive stampede that took place after a *satsang* in Sikandara Rao area in Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh, on Wednesday | PTI

NAMITA BAJPAI & PRABHAT SHUKLA @Lucknow / Hathras

A day after the stampede in Hathras claimed 121 lives, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday announced a judicial probe led by former Allahabad High Court judge Brijesh Kumar Srivastava into the tragedy. Retired IAS officer Hemant Rao and former IPS officer Bhavesh Kumar Singh are the other members in the judicial commission.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the spot and meeting the injured persons admitted in hospitals, Yogi said the conspiracy angle can't be ruled out. He said the panel will look into all aspects of the tragedy. The panel will complete its probe and submit its report within two months. To prevent such mishaps from recurring, the judicial commission will also suggest the standard operating procedure to be followed during such events, Yogi said.

Referring to the initial report filed by the special investigative team led by ADG Agra zone Anupam Kulshreshtha, Yogi said the volunteers of Bhole Baba, in whose event the stampede happened, were managing it and district administration officials were not allowed inside the pandal. Police personnel were stationed outside the pandal. Yogi said the baba's volunteers fled immediately after the stampede without making any effort to help the injured. Referring to pictures and videos of the baba with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, he said it showed the baba's political connections.

On why the baba's name was missing in the FIR, which only named the organisers, Yogi said the initial report was filed against those who sought permission for the event. "As the investigation progresses, the ambit of the FIR will also expand to include all those responsible and accountable for the tragedy," he added.

Eyewitnesses and locals who rushed to the spot immediately after the tragedy blamed the organisers for poor management. Locals said the crowd was so large that the national highway abutting the venue was cut off for up to 5 km on both sides, blocked by buses carrying devotees from far-off places. Because of this, ambulances took an hour to reach. P10

BABA ON THE RUN, POLICE RAID TRUST

Hathras deputy superintendent of police Sunil Kumar said the baba is on the run and yet to be traced. On Wednesday, police raided Baba's abode at Ram Kutir Charitable Trust in Mainpuri district

Markets on a roll, Sensex at 80,000 level

ARSHAD KHAN @New Delhi

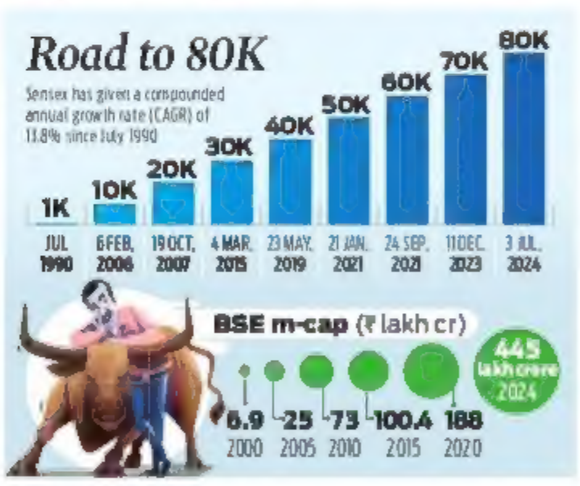
REGISTERING a new landmark for India's equity market this year, the BSE Sensex for the first time scaled the 80,000-mark on Wednesday. The 30-share benchmark hit a high of 80,057.90 during the first 30 minutes of the trading session. The Nifty50 index also touched an all-time high of 24,294.60.

The Sensex has added the latest 10,000 points in less than seven months as it had first breached the 70,000 mark on December 11, 2023. Its journey from 60,000 to 70,000 was a lengthy one as it took 1.5 years for the market to add the previous 10,000 points. Sensex had scaled the 60,000 mark on September 24, 2021.

What is notable is that the benchmark index has added about 8,000 points from the lows of June 4, the general election results day. Sensex had ended the June 4 session with a massive loss of 4,390 points, or 5.74%, at 72,079.05.

Much of Wednesday's early gain is attributed to a sharp pick-up in HDFC Bank shares. The stock opened 3% higher and hit a high of ₹1,792 per share as its weightage is expected to shoot up in the MSCI index.

"The focus of market activity today will be HDFC Bank which will continue its upward move factoring in the news of potentially increasing the weightage of the stock in the MSCI Index. The delivery based buying in the stock witnessed in the last many days has the potential to continue for a few more days pushing the stock further up and imparting resilience to it. As the weightage of HDFC Bank in Nifty increases there will be more delivery based buying by ETFs and also active funds," said V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist, Geojit Financial Services. He added that the US Fed's latest take on inflation is also positive news for equity markets globally. "The Fed's next rate action is likely to be a rate cut. RBI also is likely to follow suit with a rate cut in the next policy meeting," he said.



Modi finally ends silence, says Manipur violence is declining

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @New Delhi

BREAKING his silence on Manipur, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday told the Rajya Sabha that violence in the trouble-torn state is declining and security and social stability are improving. He saw in them a positive trend towards peace.

Replying to the debate on the motion of thanks on the President's address, Modi said normal life has been restored in most parts of Manipur with schools, colleges, offices, businesses and other institutions functioning normally in Manipur. The state, however, is facing floods now, he added.

Amid walkout by the Opposition, Modi said law enforcement agencies have lodged more than 11,000 FIRs and arrested over 500 suspects in Manipur after the ethnic violence erupted in the state.

"Our government is continuously making efforts to restore normalcy and it is showing results. Union home minister Amit Shah camped there and steered all efforts of peace," he said.

In a stern message, he said, "I want to warn all the elements trying to add fuel to the fire in Manipur to stop such activities. A time will come when Manipur itself will reject such people."

Keeping up his tirade against the Congress, Modi said the grand old party was the "biggest opponent of the Constitution" and was anti-SC, ST and OBCs.

Taking a swipe at the Opposition for its walkout, he said, "They are unable to digest the people's mandate to the NDA to serve the nation. That's why they never face the government on the floor."

Kharge with Sonia Gandhi after walking out of the Rajya Sabha | PTI

Kharge raps RSS

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday accused the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh of being anti-Constitution, quoting an article from *Organiser's* November 30, 1950 edition

CM: WHY SHOULD I RESIGN OVER MUDA SITE ALLOCATION?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday rejected BJP leaders' demand for his resignation and a CBI probe into the alleged site allotment scam and irregularities at the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

"Why should I resign? What is my role in it? Why should the investigation be given to the CBI," Siddaramaiah asked, when the media questioned him about BJP leaders demanding a CBI probe and his resignation over MUDA allotting sites to his wife in Mysuru.

He said the sites were allotted by BJP when it was in power, and accused BJP of irregularities. "As irregularities were pointed out, an inquiry has been ordered, a senior IAS officer has been appointed to look into the issue and officials who were involved in it have been transferred. Action will be taken based on the report. I am doing my work. What is my role in it," he asked.

On Tuesday, Siddarmaiah had said there was no wrongdoing in MUDA allocating sites to his wife as the Authority had developed sites on the land belonging to her.

Responding to Leader of Opposition R Ashoka's demand for his resignation, the CM asked, "Did Ashoka, who was involved in Akrama Sakrama irregularities, resign?"

He said a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed to probe alleged irregularities in the ST Corporation and ST Welfare Minister B Nagendra has resigned. But he was quick to clarify that the minister did not resign because of the allegations. The CBI is probing the role of bank staff in the alleged irregularities, he added.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who was in Channapatna, dismissed allegations of any scam in MUDA site allocation. "There have been no scams during the Congress tenure in the state. All the scams that the state is witnessing occurred during the BJP government. We will respond to all the allegations during the session," he said. MORE ON: P4

Drunk student stabs to death security staff at B'luru college

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A student of a private college, who came to the college drunk and was not allowed inside, allegedly stabbed a 52-year-old security in-charge to death. The incident took place in Amruthahalli around 3.30 pm on Wednesday.

The victim, Jaikishore Roy, hailed from Assam, while the accused, Bhargav, is from Bihar. A final-year degree student, Bhargav has been detained by the police.

After Roy refused to let him inside the college, Bhargav started arguing with him. The student then left the spot, went to a shop, purchased a knife and returned to the college. He stabbed Roy, who was at the gate, multiple times in the chest and the latter died on the spot, the police said.

Roy's family members were angry that the college management deputed him for security duty, though he was working as the cleaning in-charge. They further blamed the management for not providing him enough safety after asking him to do the security duty.

The Amruthahalli police have registered a case.

Champai exits, Hemant stakes claim to be CM

MUKESH RANJAN @Ranchi

JHARKHAND Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Hemant Soren on Wednesday staked his claim to form the Jharkhand government, hours after Champai Soren resigned as chief minister.

Hemant Soren was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a land scam case in January. He was released on bail last week. Hours before his arrest, he had resigned as Jharkhand chief minister and Champai Soren was sworn in.

Earlier on Wednesday, a meeting of INDIA bloc MLAs was held at the official residence of the chief minister in Ranchi. During the meeting, it was decided to make Hemant Soren the chief minister again. Soon after the meeting, he was unanimously elected as the leader of the JMM legislative party. Hemant Soren told reporters that all the formalities have been completed. "Everything will be disclosed soon," he said.

Jharkhand Governor C P Radhakrishnan (centre) receives the resignation letter from Chief Minister Champai Soren (fourth from right) at Raj Bhavan in Ranchi | PTI

Confirming his resignation, Champai Soren said, "Earlier, a change of guard was done in the state and I was given the responsibility. You all are aware of the developments since then. Now Hemant Soren is back and the alliance partners took a decision to choose Hemant babu as our leader once again," said Champai Soren.

Jharkhand health minister Banna Gupta said a copy of the letter of support from alliance members has been handed over to the Governor. "It is an appeal to the Governor to pave the way for the formation of a new government in the state," he said. If sworn in, Hemant Soren will be the 13th chief minister of Jharkhand.

Sources said Champai Soren is likely to be appointed as the chairman of the UPA coordination committee or the working president of the JMM.

EXPRESS READ

BBMP has no plans to hike property tax

Bengaluru: Urging residents not to give heed to any rumours, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Special Commissioner (Revenue) said there is neither any proposal nor any plans to hike the property tax in Bengaluru | P2

CISF cop who 'slapped' Ranaut shifted to B'luru

New Delhi: CISF constable Kulwinder Kaur, who allegedly slapped actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut at the Chandigarh airport last month, has been transferred to Bengaluru, pending a disciplinary inquiry, sources said on Wednesday | P3

Karnataka govt caps rates for dengue tests at ₹600

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN the wake of increasing cases of dengue in Karnataka, the health department has issued an order, capping the test rates. As per the order, no private hospitals or laboratories can charge beyond Rs 600 for the essential tests.

The prices are standardised at Rs 300 each for ELISA NS1 and ELISA IgM tests, totaling Rs 600. Additionally, the Rapid card test for NS1, IgM, and IgG screening will be Rs 250 each.

As per the order issued under the Karnataka Infectious Diseases Act 2020, the directive mandates compliance from all private hospitals and diagnostic laboratories across the state.

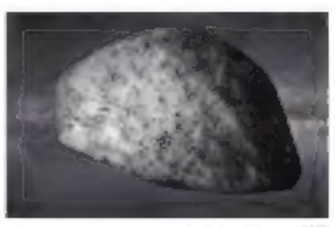
The changes were made as private hospitals and laboratories were charging varying and exorbitant rates for these essential tests. MORE ON: P2

ISRO to defend Earth against asteroids

PURAN CHOUDHARY @Bengaluru

AFTER the Moon and the Sun, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S Somanath is looking at asteroids — not just to land on them, but to prepare defences against their possible catastrophic impacts on Earth.

The ISRO chief is eyeing opportunities to explore/observe Asteroid 99942 Apophis — measuring 335 metre across and considered one of the most hazardous asteroids that could impact Earth — which is estimated to pass our planet at a dangerously close distance of less than 32,000 km on April 13, 2029.



ESA

"India should be able to observe this asteroid... Discussions are on as to how ISRO can contribute, maybe by preparing an instrument for the mission or providing other kinds of support for what is jointly being done by JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency), ESA (European Space Agency) and NASA," he said , while inaugurating a workshop on Planetary Defence for students at the ISRO headquarters on Wednesday.

"If an asteroid hits Earth, the impact can be disastrous. We need to prepare for planetary defence. If a 100-metre diameter asteroid hits us, it can be fatal, an entire nation could be wiped out," he said. P5

G-1 Mission on track

India's ambitious G-1 unmanned mission is getting ready for launch by the end of this year, said ISRO Chairman S Somanath. The four astronauts who will be part of the crew module are under a rigorous programme at the capability centre, he said | P5